Toronto metro

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2015

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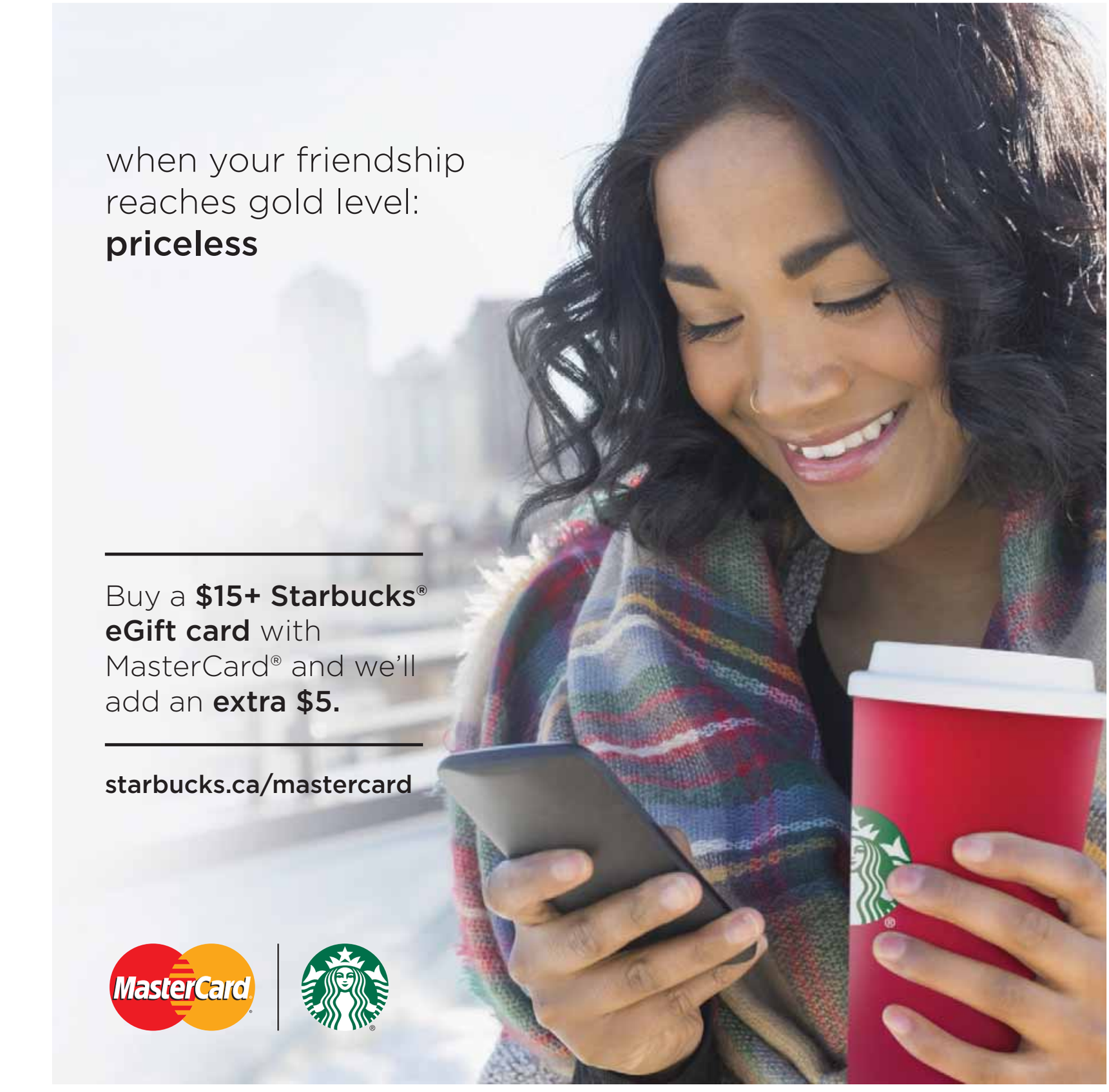

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5 GREAT EXPERIENTIAL GIFTS

For the person on your list who doesn't have it all and doesn't want it either.

metroNEWS

Emma Teitel
Spotlight just as bright for spectacular losses
metroVIEWS

Toronto metro

Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2015 | High 9°C/Low 5°C Scattered showers

Woman stabbed before fatal fall

BATHURST-ST. CLAIR

Police identify husband in killing, believe wife was pregnant

Precious Charbonneau was living one of the most eventful years in her life. The newlywed would frequently post adoring public messages to her husband on Facebook. She was also nine weeks pregnant, according to police, and excited to find out her baby's gender.

Her joyous times came to a tragic end Sunday, when police believe Charbonneau, 33, was stabbed by her husband, then somehow fell from her apartment balcony. A post-mortem showed it was the fall, not the stab wounds, that killed her.

Her husband, Robert Giblin, 43, was a decorated air force sergeant who served two Afghanistan tours. Giblin was found dead close to her, after also falling from great height. Both were found outside of the highrise building where they lived on Raglan Avenue., near Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue West, just before 6 p.m. on Sunday. It is believed they lived on the 21st floor.

Robert Giblin with wife Precious Charbonneau FACEBOOK

Police are not seeking suspects, but are looking for more information. Still, it's unclear if more information will be made public, leaving the possibility questions about why Charbonneau was killed will remain unanswered.

Charbonneau and Giblin's relationship played out on social media in a series of fast-paced milestones. They first appear together in a photo on Aug. 13, 2015. They're married on Nov. 14.

On Nov. 27, Charbonneau checks in at St. Michael's neonatal clinic. On Dec. 11, she makes an ultrasound picture of a fetus her profile picture. Her last moment on Facebook is a public check-in at Uncle Tetsu's, a Japanese cheesecake store in downtown Toronto at 3:23 p.m., about two and a half hours before her death.

Giblin's last post was a picture taken around 1 a.m. Sunday morning. In it, the couple is lying down, embracing. His eyes are closed, as if he's sleeping. She's smiling into the camera with her head resting on his face.

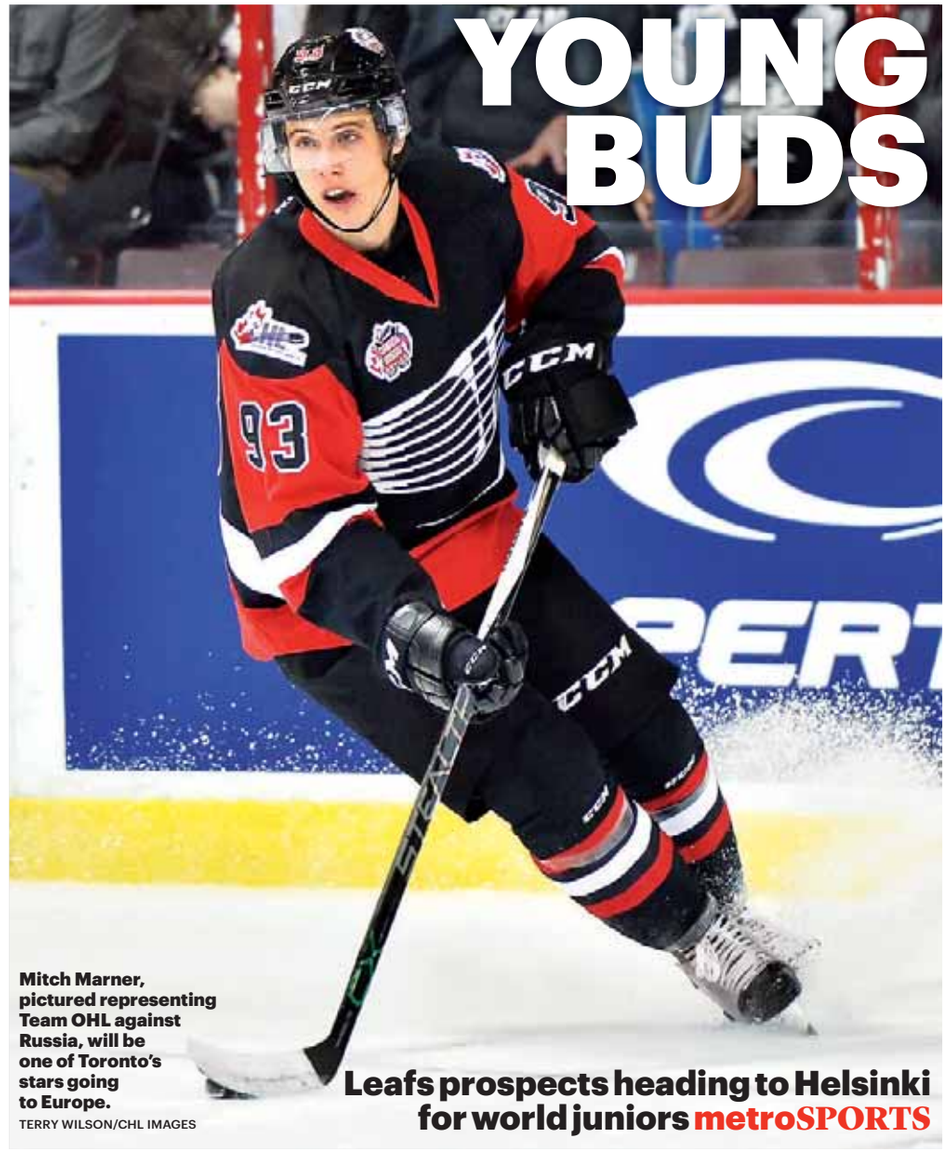
Giblin was an intelligence operator with the Canadian Armed Forces and a sergeant with the Joint Task Force Central based out of the Denison Armoury in Toronto, Lonny Kates, spokesman for the Department of National Defence confirmed. He was deployed to Afghanistan in 2005 and 2007.

"The loss of any soldier is ... devastating to the military community and our thoughts and condolences go out to Sergeant Robert Giblin's family and friends," Kates said in a statement.

Curtis Quinn, who grew up with Giblin but hadn't seen him in recent years, described him as a quiet man who "kept his cards close to his chest."

Quinn was shocked to hear of the violent deaths of Giblin and his wife. "I don't even know what to make of that," he said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



YOUNG BUDS

Mitch Marner, pictured representing Team OHL against Russia, will be one of Toronto's stars going to Europe.
TERRY WILSON/CHL IMAGES

Leafs prospects heading to Helsinki for world juniors metroSPORTS

Get to know Lolo

Lolo lives in colour

Lolo's dog has 5,000 followers

Lolo wears what works

Lolo doesn't skip breakfast

Lolo goes where she wants

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Bill Cosby sues model Beverly Johnson over claims comedian drugged her in 1980s.

BABIES

Names list sees changes

When tallying up the province's tiny tots, Sophia and Jackson — spelled in a variety of different ways — turned out to be the most popular baby names in Ontario.

The names beat out previous top choices Olivia and Liam when different spellings of a name were combined and treated as one entry.

It's the first time the province has calculated the popularity of baby names in such a way, in an effort to reflect the impact of non-traditional spellings.

"It really changes the list," said Anne-Marie Flanagan, a spokeswoman with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. "It's a way to show this new trend of parents going with different spellings."

The government has also put out a traditional top names list — that ranks each name based on its exact spelling — which has Olivia and Liam remaining the most common choices in the province for the fourth year in a row, Flanagan said.

Different cities had their own top choices — in Ottawa it was Olivia and Benjamin, while in Thunder Bay, Emily and Jack were the most popular.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

T.O. CHOICES

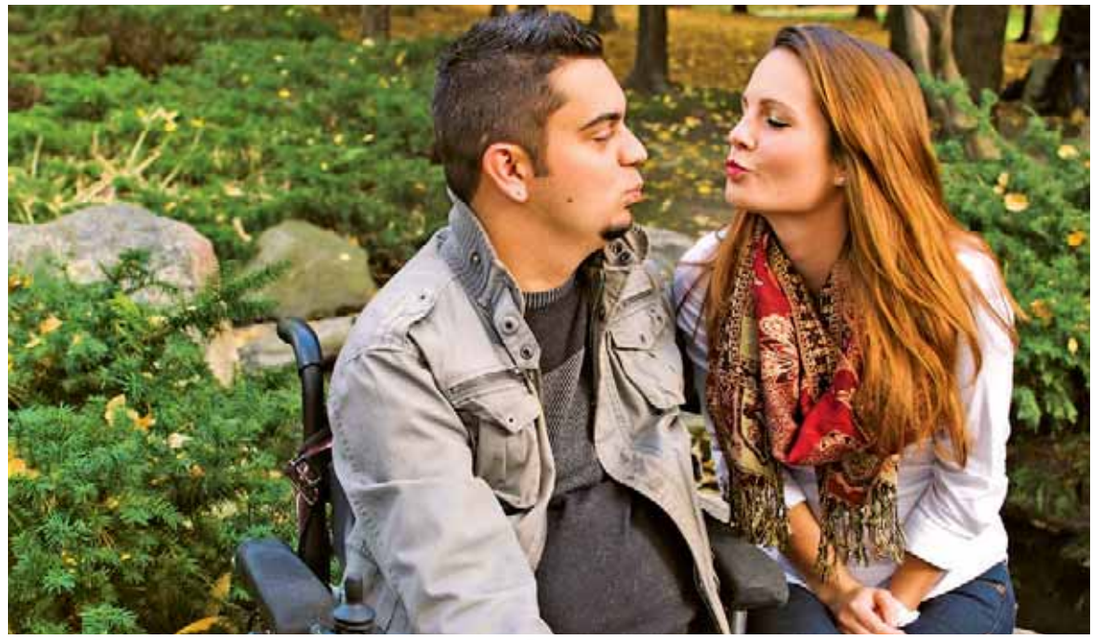
Emma and Daniel were listed as the most popular baby names in Toronto.

Lack of access 'ridiculous'

CINEPLEX

Woman asks movie chain to look into improvements

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto



Chantelle Bernardo and Shawn Farrugia are getting married in February. **Last week, they were unable to watch a movie together at a Cineplex theatre in Mississauga because Shawn uses a wheelchair.** COURTESY MARTIKA JABARI

It was supposed to be a fun afternoon at a movie theatre — instead, it's turned into the beginning of a battle with Cineplex over accessibility issues.

Chantelle Bernardo and her fiancé, Shawn Farrugia, set out to watch The Hunger Games: Mockingjay last week at Rathburn Cineplex in Mississauga. There was a gated-off section of the theatre where Farrugia — who uses a wheelchair — could sit, but there was no space for Bernardo.

"The only seat for me was on the other side of the staircase, about 10 feet away from him," Bernardo said. When she asked for a folding chair so she could be near her fiancé, she was told it would be a fire hazard.

"It's ridiculous," she said. "It made me quite upset."

The couple left without watching the movie, and the theatre manager refunded the cost of their tickets and snacks, Bernardo said.

Later in the week, Cineplex itself offered an apology, movie tickets for a year and other screening packages.

"I didn't want any of that," Bernardo said.

Rather, she wants the company to make a commitment to making theatres accessible and user friendly for everyone.

In a statement to Metro, Cineplex director of communications Sarah Van Lange acknowledged the auditorium in question doesn't have companion seats, saying she believes it is "literally the one auditorium in our network of over 1,600 auditoriums" that doesn't.

The company is looking to address that in the coming year, she wrote, noting the work might take longer than some would like due to various construction permits that will be needed.

> **"This is a violation of a human right for equal access to spaces we desire."**
> Luke Anderson

There's much more that needs to be done than addressing the one theatre, Bernardo said. Many other aspects of Rathburn Cineplex are lacking in accessibility, she said. For example, she said, many bathrooms aren't wheelchair accessible, and doors to individual theatres are not power operated, preventing wheelchair users from entering without needing assistance.

Bernardo's asked for a sit-down with Cineplex representatives to detail the issues. She's yet to receive a response.

"They've been very slow in responding, which goes to show you how much they care about the issue," she said. "These are serious problems that need to be addressed."

Luke Anderson, who runs the Toronto-based StopGap Foundation, said the situation illustrates the need for more work in the area of accessibility.

Many movie theatres across the city only allow people in wheelchair to sit in places very close to the front, which can prevent them from enjoying the movie experience just like others, he said. And in most cases, these accessible seats don't have companion-seating places, he said.

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Cyclist's family seeks 'closure'

OLIVEIRA SENTENCING

Tom Samson's parents, widow deliver impact statements

Miguel Oliveira leaves the courthouse with his lawyer Calvin Barry. CHRIS SO/TORONTO STAR

To "really punish" himself, Uri Samson says he'll sometimes pay a visit to the intersection where his son, Tom, was killed in 2012.

The bike the 35-year-old was riding when he was hit by a minivan on an early November morning was a gift from his father, who had taught him to ride as a child.

Uri Samson was speaking before a packed courtroom on Monday at the sentencing hearing for Miguel Oliveira, who pleaded guilty in May to failing to remain at the scene of an accident causing death.

He said he can still remember Tom asking "Are you holding on, Daddy?" when the two would practice riding in a parking lot.

Tom Samson would grow up to become an avid cyclist, like his father. He himself was a father of two and a popular Grade 2 teacher at Swansea Public School when he was killed at Davenport Road and Lansdowne Avenue.

Court heard that Oliveira, a landscaper, was driving to work. Samson was biking to meet some colleagues for breakfast.

It was an emotional day in court for the Samson family, who read out their victim impact statements and lamented the many delays that have plagued the proceedings, especially since Oliveira's guilty plea.

"I need this criminal procedure to end and look forward to the little closure it will bring," said Samson's widow, Kasia Briegmann-Samson. "I still can't fathom that Tom will be 35 forever and that my life continues without him."

Oliveira, who is to be married next year and is the father of a 4-year-old daughter, kept his head down while Samson's widow and parents spoke. When it was his turn to give a statement, it was in a barely audible voice.

"I want to sincerely apologize for what happened," he said, his eyes fixed on a piece of paper in front of him. "I take full responsibility."

His lawyer, Calvin Barry, is asking for a 60-day jail sentence, to be served on weekends, and a one-year driving prohibition. Crown attorney Helen Song wants 12 to 18 months in jail and a five-year ban on driving.

Superior Court Justice Faye McWatt will deliver her ruling on Jan. 12. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

STREET SPORTS

City to review hockey net bylaw

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Street hockey is an old Canadian tradition. **The city is looking to amend a current bylaw prohibiting the installation of hockey and basketball nets on roads.** TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Torontonians may, after all, be allowed to keep street hockey and basketball nets unhindered.

The city is looking to review and amend an existing bylaw under which residents can be fined for leaving the nets on the public right of way.

"We need to encourage our children to live active lifestyles and give them opportunities to play outside," said Ward 16 Coun. Christin Carmichael Greb, who moved a motion last month asking transportation services to report on the feasibility of amending the bylaw.

She said her ward is "green space deficient" with very few places for children to play outdoor, and an opportunity to play outside their homes would help address the issue.

The existing bylaw prevents residents from installing and leaving hockey and basketball nets at the end of their driveways — considered as public property. Failure to comply could result in a $90 penalty, according to the bylaw.

Bylaw enforcers don't normally go out to issue tickets to non-compliers, except when there's a complaint from other residents. But notices of violations and warnings have been issued to residents across the city, said Jacqueline White, director of transportation services in North York. The report on the amendment is expected next spring. In the meantime, the bylaw enforcement is temporarily on hold, but it doesn't mean people should leave the nets on the streets, she said.

White added that they could interfere with road maintenance, plowing work or access to other utilities.

> **Some of (the nets) are right on the paved road and are not necessarily visible, especially at night.** Jacqueline White

Ontario Energy Board

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toronto.ca/recycle

TORONTO

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An extra dollar for every spot

Facing an operating budget with a $57-million shortfall and no way to pay for some $22 billion in infrastructure projects, politicians in Toronto seem to have accepted the city has a revenue problem, and filling holes in the city's coffers will undoubtedly require a property-tax increase. Various councillors, meanwhile, are floating ideas on how to bring in more revenue over and above that. Today, Coun. Joe Mihevc tells us why he favours a dollar-a-day parking levy on commercial parking spaces.

MINDING TORONTO'S $9 BUDGET GAP

Paying for more parking

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Many of the revenue tools being discussed — including a municipal sales tax or hiking development charges — require changes to the City of Toronto Act, and thus the blessing of the provincial government.

That's a problem for council, given they need to come up with at least $57 million by February, when the 2016 budget gets approved.

But Coun. Joe Mihevc has a revenue plan he says the city could implement tomorrow. The Ward 21 councillor wants the city to levy a charge on all commercial parking spots in the city.

"We have the legal authority to do this now. We don't have to wait for provincial consent," he said.

At a fee of $1 a day, Mihevc says, the levy would bring in more than $500 million in revenue annually.

"It yields significant resources that would take us a long way to solving our operating budget woes and it would be a dramatic contribution to the city-building fund the mayor has said he wants to establish," Mihevc said.

Under Mihevc's plan, commercial landlords would be charged based on the number of parking spaces they own. That could add up quickly — Yorkdale Mall, for example, has over 7,200 parking spots — and property owners could decide whether to pass the cost on to shoppers.

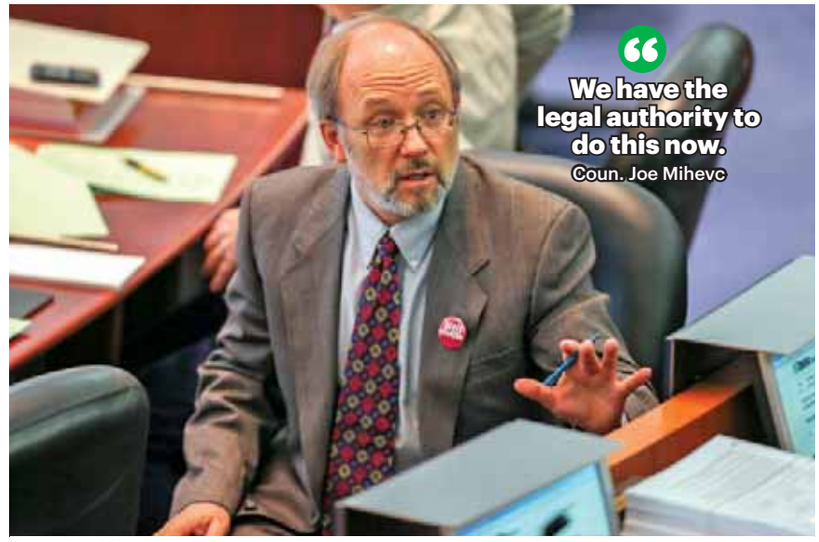
"It has the added benefit of affecting people's behaviour," Mihevc said. "Let's say they pass the cost on to the user of the parking stall. People might decide to take public transit instead of paying more for parking."

Mihevc did say the city would also be charged for the spaces in its "Green P" parking lots.

Compared to other revenue tools, Mihevc said a parking levy is more "equitable."

"It doesn't hit the residential property tax owner. It would have a minimal impact on low-income Torontonians."

Have a revenue tool idea of your own? Email luke.simcoe@metronews.ca



Coun. Joe Mihevc is suggesting money be raised through a parking levy. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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Mother's powerful plea to drivers

ROAD SAFETY

Three children were killed in Vaughan crash

The woman whose father and three young children were killed in a Vaughan car crash is begging people not to drink and drive this Christmas.

Jennifer Neville-Lake shared a holiday photo of her children on Facebook alongside a plea for others not to drink and drive.

"This Sunday afternoon you can: Go to the park. Read a book. Play a board game. Help someone. Play dress up. Bake. Spend time with your loved ones. Please DON'T drink and drive! Love Harry, Milly and Daniel."

Neville-Lake's three children, Daniel, 9, Harrison, 5, and 2-year-old Milly, along with her father, Gary Neville, died in a Sept. 27 car crash. Her mother and grandmother were also injured.

The family's minivan collided with an SUV driven by Marco Muzzo, 29, at the intersection of Kirby Rd. and Kipling Ave.

Muzzo faces a number of impaired-driving charges.

Neville-Lake also shared a photo of a mall Santa holding a picture of her kids and father in his lap as a reminder they aren't around to celebrate Christmas.

Almost 2,500 Facebook users shared Neville-Lake's heartbreaking Christmas card. Since the accident, she has urged the federal government to create stiffer penalties for drunk driving.

"What possessed you to do this? What did we ever do to you?" she said after seeing video footage of Muzzo in court.

"We paid such a high price, for what?" TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

FACEBOOK

ONLINE THREATS

U of T to tighten security policies

Starting in 2016, the University of Toronto says it will be taking online threats against staff or students more seriously.

The school faced criticism in September when it chose not to disclose the details of threats posted in the comments section of the BlogTO website.

On Sept. 5, an anonymous user posted comments on a number of articles encouraging readers to obtain a gun from a "gang" and stage a mass shooting inside a women's studies classroom.

> **"It's different than we've had any other year before.**
> William Taylor on the spike in online threats against North American campuses

Although U of T increased security on its three campuses in response, the university did not inform students the threats were directed at feminists and women's studies students.

U of T spokeswoman Althea Blackburn-Evans said the decision was made after consulting with police, who later deemed the threats to be not credible.

However, Blackburn-Evans has said the school will be reviewing its policies around online threats in the new year, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of College and University Security Administrators.

"This group will be coordinating efforts to address online threats and best practices of response and action," she told the Canadian Press.

Reached by Metro Monday, Blackburn-Evans was unable to provide details about what kind of changes will be made.

According to William Taylor, president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, 2015 saw a spike in online threats being made against North American campuses.

"It's different than we've had any other year before," he said. Canadian universities aren't immune to the phenomenon, he added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

IN BRIEF

Charges laid in lottery scam
Three people in Toronto are facing charges in a lottery scheme that took investigators as far as Austin, Texas.

Emmanual Ajayi, 38, Patrick Onyeukwu, 30, and Margaret Ajayi-Dosumu, 33, all of Toronto, have been charged with possessing and laundering proceeds of crime. METRO

Man in serious condition after fall from ladder
A worker was taken to hospital with serious injuries Monday morning after falling from a ladder at a City Centre construction site.

Ontario's Ministry of Labour is investigating the incident that occurred just after 9 a.m. on Duke of York Boulevard. LOUIE ROSELLA/MISSISSAUGA NEWS

Emergency at local eatery
Carbon monoxide poisoning at the Chinese Halal Restaurant in Toronto restaurant sent eight people, including one child, to the hospital Sunday night. It is unclear what caused the leak. All those hospitalized have non-life threatening injuries. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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HBC

5 WAYS TO GIVE AN "EXPERIENTIAL" CHRISTMAS

If fighting through crowds at the mall has you suffering from a case of "affluenza," don't worry. In a city as diverse and vibrant as Toronto, there's no shortage of non-material gifts. Here are five ideas for what to get that person on your list who would rather do things than get things.

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

1 The Mysterious Package Company

Delight the mystery lover on your list with elaborate, personalized narratives revealed to them through letters and other posted goodies. It's interactive storytelling at its most tactile.

2 Cooking classes

The gift that keeps on giving, cooking classes are available all over. Nella Cucina offers a variety, from knife skills to baking, taught by experienced chefs.

3 Be a tourist in your own city

Get a new perspective on your hometown. Hop on a double-decker tour bus, or fly above the skyline on a helicopter tour courtesy of Toronto Heli Tours. If you're on a budget, bundle up, rent a Bike Share bicycle and pedal around an unfamiliar neighbourhood with a friend.

4 Archery, axe throwing and obstacles

Help loved ones channel Katniss at the Archery District. Give a wannabe lumberjack axe-throwing lessons at BATL, or get tough at Pursuit OCR's indoor obstacle course.

5 Art Gallery of Ontario Pass

The gallery is one of our premiere cultural institutions, and a membership includes unlimited access to the regular collection and entry to special exhibits. Bonus: The upper floor atrium is one of the best places in the city to relax and have a coffee.

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Lane hogs put riders at risk

SAFETY

6,500 tickets issued so far, enforcement staff say

A cyclist has to go around a car parked in a bike lane on Adelaide Street. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Every weekday Colin Powell cycles the separated lanes on Adelaide and Richmond streets. Every day he is forced into car and truck traffic by at least one vehicular bike-lane invader.

"I have never ever seen a cop writing a ticket. Are they patrolling?," asks Powell, wondering if better separation of the lanes — more flexible posts and planters — would be a more effective deterrent.

The small but growing downtown network of separated "cycle tracks" are hailed by politicians, beloved by the booming ranks of cyclists who use them, and treated as a convenient pull-over shoulder by some motorists.

Powell is far from alone in saying he never sees lane invaders ticketed but Brian Moniz, a parking enforcement supervisor, says his staff have issued more than 6,500 $150 tickets this year. Officers ticketing cars blocking other cars as part of Mayor John Tory's traffic blitzes are expected to get lane blockers as well. One officer roams downtown looking specifically for the invaders, he says.

Officers operate under a "target" system, expected to write a certain number of tickets per shift. That makes a row of illegally parked cars that are not jeopardizing anybody's safety more enticing than a lone lane invader forcing multiple cyclists into traffic.

Moniz insists that is not a problem, saying officers are expected to target a "fair composition" of parking offences.

The problem, he says, is that drivers take off while the officer is writing the $150 ticket, or leave between the time a cyclist reports them and the officer arrives. Taxi drivers, he says, are especially skilled at the cat-and-mouse game.

Moniz believes that if officers are able to issue a ticket without "affixing" it to the car — by recording the licence plate and other details for a ticket mailed to the car owner — it will make everyone safer. The city expects to start using the provincially granted power next year.

"That's the best thing that we could achieve in order to change behaviour for the enforcement of this offence," he says. "If they knew that even parking there momentarily meant they could get a ticket in the mail, eliminating that cat-and-mouse game, I think it would change public behaviour with these bike lanes and people would get the message."

Powell isn't so sure. Couriers and mobile document shredders will still block lanes as long as they are physically able, he says, with any increase in tickets chalked up as a cost of business.

But it isn't only cars and trucks forcing cyclists into traffic. Condo construction on multiple sections of lanes, particularly on Adelaide, has invaded bike lanes.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BY THE NUMBERS

Tickets issued for illegally parking in a bike lane:
2015 (to November)**:** 6,530
2014: 6,807
2013: 6,719
2012: 12,956

On-street bike lane construction:
2015: 10 km added, 2 km upgraded to separated cycle tracks.
2014: 14.4 km added, 5 km upgraded to separated tracks.
2013: 2.3 km added, 2.9 km upgraded to cycle tracks.
2012: 3.8 km upgraded to cycle tracks.
2011: Removal of 15.7 km for a net loss of 14.5 km.

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HANS ISLAND

New leaders could solve land feud: Expert

It's hard to imagine a less likely trigger point between two more unlikely combatants than rocky, chilly, empty Hans Island up near the top of the globe.

But as University of British Columbia political science professor Michael Byers ruefully observes: "Wars have been fought in the past over seemingly small things."

He thinks Canada and Denmark will want to avoid such a rotten state of affairs.

What's more, he told Torstar News Service, current political events provide a window — and this season of peace offers a powerful incentive — to melt at least some of the diplomatic iciness in the Arctic.

At a conference at Aarhus University in November, Byers and his Danish colleague, Michael Boss, put forward the Aarhus Declaration — which proposes that the dispute over Hans Island be resolved by creating a condominium of shared authority."

> **Wise statesmen and diplomats seek to resolve small problems while they're small.**
> Michael Byers

Byers said he has thought about such a plan for years, but "it didn't seem like something the Harper government would likely seize upon."

The new governments of Canada and Denmark "should both want to send positive signals about Arctic co-operation, about dispute settlement," Byers said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Hans Island has been quietly creating tension between Canada and Denmark since 1973. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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METROLINX

Pot gaining favour: Poll

ONTARIO SURVEY

Young voters more likely to smoke weed if legalized

More young adults in Ontario say they would smoke marijuana if the federal government legalizes the drug, according to a new public opinion poll.

The provincewide survey, released exclusively to Torstar News Service by Forum Research, found that 29 per cent of respondents aged 18 to 34 reported using weed in the past year. But 39 per cent of people in the same demographic said they would likely take the drug if it were legal.

Forum president Lorne Bozinoff said the increase was not unexpected, given that young people generally have a more permissive attitude toward pot.

He noted that overall, it doesn't appear that legalization would prompt a sharp uptake in marijuana use. Only 22 per cent of respondents of all ages said they would use pot if the law were changed, a small change from the 17 per cent who said they consumed the drug in the past year.

"(Legalization) is not going to be the great cultural revolution that people are thinking it's going to be," Bozinoff said. "When you look at how many are using it now and how many would use it when it's legal, it's not that many people at the end of the day."

> **(Legalization) is not going to be the great cultural revolution that people are thinking it's going to be.**
> Lorne Bozinoff

In its inaugural speech from the throne earlier this month, the new Liberal government promised to "legalize, regulate and restrict access to marijuana." The poll found that a majority of Ontarians, or 56 per cent, support that goal.

But though Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said regulating the drug will help keep it out of the hands of minors, he has yet to outline what an overhauled legal regime would look like. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

WHAT THE RESPONDENTS SAID

1. **36%** of Ontario voters disapprove of legalizing marijuana.
2. **20%** of male respondents used marijuana in the past year.
3. **14%** of female respondents used marijuana in the past year.
4. **8%** of Progressive Conservative supporters said they used marijuana in the past year.
5. **19%** of Liberal supporters said they used marijuana in the past year.
6. **29%** of respondents aged 18 to 34 who believe marijuana should be sold in convenience stores. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Spanking law to be revoked

SECTION 43

End in sight for 'reasonable' force against children

The Liberal government plans to repeal a section of the Criminal Code that protects parents — and teachers — who use spanking and other "reasonable" force against children.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to implement all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that investigated the dark history and ongoing legacy of the Indian residential school system. One of them was to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

"The commission believes that corporal punishment is a relic of a discredited past and has no place in Canadian schools or homes," the TRC wrote in its final report released last week.

A spokesman for Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould confirmed Monday the federal government includes that recommendation in its overall pledge, but said it is too early to get into other details.

"The government is committed to implementing all of the 94 calls to action. However, at this point, we cannot speculate on potential legislative or policy approaches to address this issue," spokesman Christian Girouard wrote in an email Monday.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **Corporal punishment is a relic of a discredited past and has no place in Canadian schools or homes.**
>
> A statement released by TRC

IRAQ DEFENCE MINISTER KEEPS FOCUS ON TRAINING Canadian Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan writes in the visitors' book before meeting with Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani on Monday. Sajjan toured the front lines in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, meeting with Kurdish military commanders and Canadian special forces who repelled last week's major offensive west of Irbil. SAFIN HAMED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

LAS VEGAS

Family narrowly escapes carnage

Two Canadians remained in a Las Vegas hospital with critical head wounds on Monday after a woman struck them and more than 30 other people with her vehicle on a busy sidewalk along the city's famous casino strip.

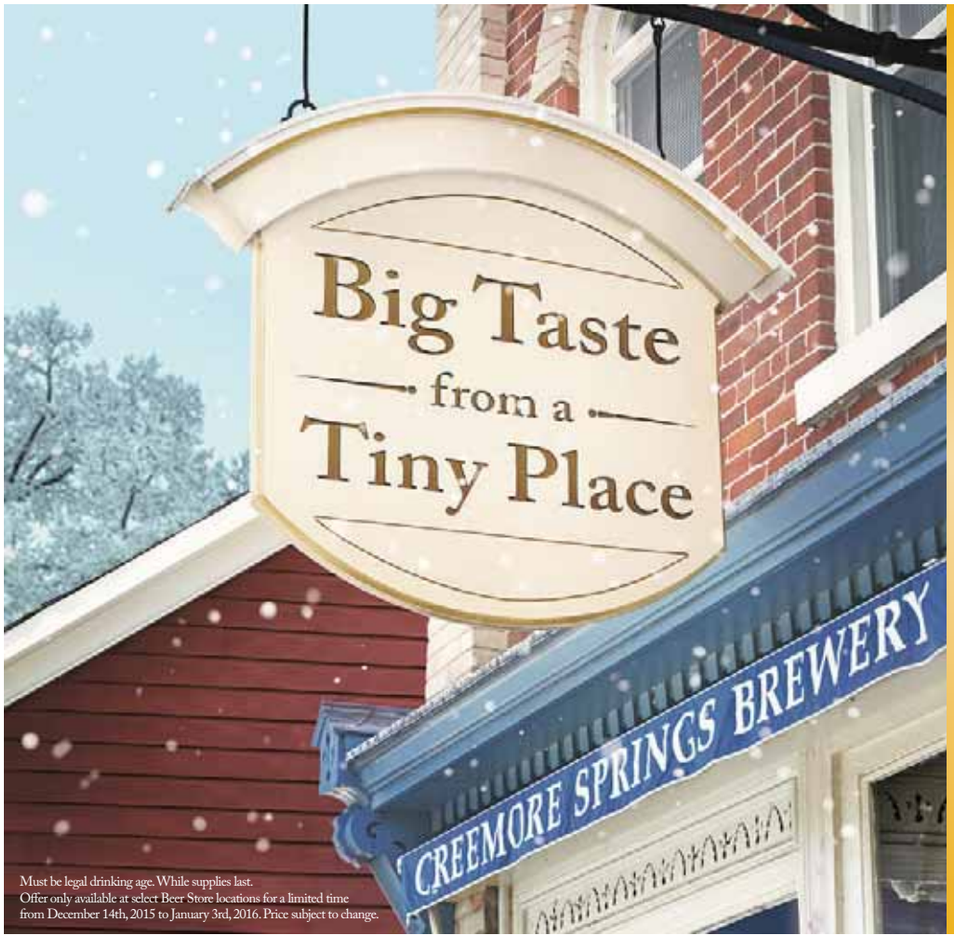
Police in Las Vegas said Lakeisha Holloway, 24, appeared to be intentionally driving her car into dozens of pedestrians Sunday evening.

If a Calgary family hadn't stopped to sit down, they would have been right in the middle of the carnage.

Mark Vazquez-Mackay, a painter who lives in Calgary, had a stomachache after he and his family ate at a nearby restaurant, so he decided to sit down for a bit.

He said they were a block away when the rampage occurred in front of the Paris Hotel & Casino and Planet Hollywood.

"We would have been right there. It could have been us ... It was very frightening." METRO, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS



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HEALTH SCIENCES

Blood donation ban amended for gay men

The three-decade-old U.S. ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men was formally lifted Monday, but major restrictions will continue to limit who can donate.

The Food and Drug Administration said it is replacing the lifetime ban with a new policy barring donations from men who have had sex with a man in the previous year. While the one-year-ban has been criticized by activists it matches policies in other countries, including Australia, Japan and the U.K.

Gay rights activists said the new policy is a "step in the right direction," but falls short.

"It continues to stigmatize gay and bisexual men," said David Stacy, of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest U.S. gay rights group. "It simply cannot be justified in light of current scientific research and updated blood screening technology."

Monday's policy shift was first proposed in late 2014 and follows years of lobbying by medical groups and gay rights groups, who said the previous ban was outdated and perpetuated negative stereotypes.

Dr. Peter Marks of the FDA said the change is "backed by sound scientific evidence" and will "continue to protect our blood supply."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

15.7M

About 15.7 million blood donations are collected in the U.S. each year. The American Red Cross estimates the risk of getting an HIV-positive blood donation is 1 in 1.5 million for all U.S. patients.

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1 Chinese Paramilitary police in Shanghai. GETTY IMAGES

2 Rescuers search for survivors in the Yangtze River. GETTY IMAGES

3 Fire and smoke rises after explosions in Tianjin. GETTY IMAGES

4 The aftermath of a landslide in Shenzhen. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China's year of disasters

SAFETY REGULATIONS

Four incidents spark outrage, demand for more oversight

China's year of man-made disasters began on New Year's Eve when 36 revelers were killed in a stampede in Shanghai. Four of the incidents in 2015 have prompted the government to pledge to improve industrial oversight and safety regulations.

1 Shanghai Stampede:
About 30 minutes before midnight on Dec. 31, 2014, people were jostling to climb a viewing platform next to the Pu river on the scenic Bund promenade when the stampede started. The crush killed 36 people and injured 49. The Communist Party boss, district police chief and a third local official in the Huangpu riverfront district were fired and disciplined for corruption.

2 Yangtze Sinking:
The Eastern Star cruise ship capsized in severe winds on the Yangtze River, causing China's worst shipwreck in more than 60 years. More than 440 people died in the June 1 disaster. Captain Zhang Shunwen was arrested after he was rescued.

3 Tianjin Explosions:
A series of explosions at a chemical warehouse on Aug. 12 levelled a swath of the port city of Tianjin, killing 173 and injuring nearly 800. Investigators found that a company, Ruihai Logistics, illegally had stored the combustible chemicals within a kilometre of a residential area.

4 Shenzhen Landslide:
A mountain of excavated soil and construction waste toppled after being soaked by heavy rains, hitting buildings in an industrial park in Shenzhen on Dec. 20. At least 85 people are missing, and an official microblog said survival possibilities in the collapsed buildings were small.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Muslims hid passengers from armed militants
Muslims in a bus in northern Kenya Monday helped dress non-Muslims passengers in Islamic garb, to prevent Islamic extremists from identifying them for slaughter.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taliban bombing kills six
A suicide attacker rammed an explosives-laden motorcycle into a joint NATO-Afghan patrol Monday, killing six American troops. Two U.S. troops and an Afghan were wounded.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Realtors try virtual reality

REAL ESTATE

Toronto firm turns floor plans into 3D mockups

Overseas investors looking to park their money in Canadian real estate could soon be donning headsets and touring upcoming condo developments in virtual reality, according to the founder of a Toronto-based technology firm.

Invent Dev turns floor plans of new developments into 3D, immersive mockups that can be experienced in virtual reality, such as through the Oculus Rift system, or via the Samsung Gear VR headset.

David Payne, the company's founder and CEO, says he's been getting tremendous interest from the Chinese community.

PROPERTIES

Foreign investors are willing to buy condos without visiting them in person first.

"They are very excited about the potential," he said, noting that in the past week alone he has received three media inquiries from Chinese news outlets.

The technology could help Canadian developers tap into global markets by allowing prospective buyers to tour a space without ever having to board a plane, he said. "They can now, from the comfort of their own home, view any floor plan that they want, with the finishes they want, and feel like they're actually inside that home," says Payne.

The technology can benefit developers in other ways as well, says Payne.

Rather than building model suites, Lifestyle Custom Homes employed Invent Dev's technology to create virtual reality mockups of its upcoming development in Toronto's Leslieville neighbourhood — a significant cost saving for the company, says Payne.

While full-blown virtual reality — the kind that's experienced through a headset — is relatively new in the Canadian real estate industry, a number of agents have been using other technologies to create immersive experiences of homes.

Invent Dev founder David Payne says virtual reality technology could help Canadian developers tap into global markets. CHRISTOPHER KATSAROV/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cameras such as the Matterport Pro 3D can scan an existing home and create a three-dimensional rendering of it that can be viewed through a simple web browser. A number of Toronto-based brokers with Sotheby's International Realty Canada, which works with a large proportion of overseas buyers, started using the technology earlier this year.

Ara Mamourian says his brokerage, SpringRealty.ca, has been using online virtual tours for all of its listings since 2013. One of the things that prompted Mamourian to start offering the service was a high number of calls from overseas buyers.

"They … can essentially walk through the house and actually feel how big the rooms are, or how small the rooms are, without being fooled by that wide-angle lens," he says.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FISHING

Thailand denies ignoring shrimp industry slavery

Thailand's government said Monday it is not ignoring the slavery and forced labour in its lucrative shrimp industry that was highlighted in an Associated Press investigation published last week.

At the news conference Monday, government officials did not deny the existence of forced labour but they disputed parts of the story, especially the AP's assertion that police took bribes and turned a blind eye to the practices in the industry.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

market minute

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B.C. tech startups threaten 'dinosaur' industries

One technology startup is using artificial intelligence to save people who book online flights up to 80 per cent. Another helps farmers boost their crop yields with a mobile app that manages operations from seed to sale. A third aims to replace bank accounts with only a card and an app.

They're all part of a boom in digital-technology startups in Vancouver that are challenging old methods of doing business, and they're out to "disrupt" everything from travel to agriculture to financial services.

"You adapt or you die," said Ray Walia, CEO of Launch Academy, a non-profit firm that trains and mentors such startups. The organization has helped entrepreneurs start more than 350 companies, raising about $57 million in funding and creating over 635 jobs across 15 industries. They include TripDelta, Farm At Hand and Koho.

Walia said employers outside the technology world must change the mindset that "bleeding-edge" advancements don't matter to their industries.

"It's those technology companies that are going to help those incumbents — those dinosaurs — stay alive."

The youth-propelled trend is also flourishing in the technology hubs of Toronto and Montreal.

About 84,000 British Columbians were employed by over 9,000 tech companies in 2014, according to the provincial Technology Ministry — more than in mining, forestry, and oil and gas combined.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ray Walia THE CANADIAN PRESS

Handset Sale this week.

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metro VIEWS

Your essential daily news

Tuesday, December 22, 2015

Witnesses who can pick a recent robbery culprit out of a line-up are usually right, a new study says. But if the test is done months later at trial, false memories may have taken hold.

EMMA TEITEL: ON A BEAUTY QUEEN'S BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Can you honestly say you remember last year's Miss Universe winner — or runner-up? I know I can't, because last year's pageant was a blunder-free affair.

If aliens crash-land on earth tomorrow and demand to know what humans mean when they write #Fail, world leaders should provide them with a tape of Sunday night's Miss Universe pageant.

The now-viral event was more awkward than a thousand puberties because its host, comedian Steve Harvey, accidentally crowned the wrong beauty queen. Harvey misread his most important cue card and declared Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo, a.k.a. Miss Colombia, winner of the competition, when in fact she was first runner-up. When Gutierrez proceeded to bask in her newfound glory — the sparkly tiara already resting on her head — Harvey interjected to announce his mistake. The rightful recipient of the Miss Universe title was in fact Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach, a.k.a. Miss Philippines, who, thoroughly confused, walked to centre stage where she was forced to claimed her competitor's crown.

Nobody was a winner on Sunday, not Miss Colombia, who likely lived her worst nightmare, not Wurtzbach who was deprived of her shining moment, and certainly not Harvey, whose initial tweet apologizing for his error was itself rife with errors; he spelled both the Philippines and Colombia incorrectly. (Harvey, the author of a popular dating advice book, Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man, should consider writing a new tome: Read Everything Twice.) This year's Miss Universe pageant appears to be a lose-lose-lose situation; the sort of colossal public slip-up in which you feel deeply sorry for everyone involved.

But appearances can be deceiving — especially where beauty pageants are concerned. Take a step back from the cruel spectacle of the event, and Harvey's mistake, unfortunate and awkward as it was, may actually be a blessing for the women affected. For starters, we know their names. Can you honestly say that you remember last year's Miss Universe winner — or runner-up? I know I can't because last year's pageant was a blunder-free affair. If the goal of the pageant contestant is to be crowned before an adoring audience and strut across a stage blowing kisses uninterrupted, then Gutierrez Arevalo and Wurtzbach have every reason to curl up in a ball and cry. But if their goal is lasting exposure and relevance on the world stage, they should rejoice.

Temporary tears The accidental crowning of Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo, above, may have been quickly followed by the sting of disappointment, but both the victorious Miss Universe and the hastily re-christened runner-up should be grateful for the publicity, Emma Teitel writes. GETTY IMAGES

Thanks to Harvey's epic mess-up they will be remembered! This is especially true of Gutierrez Arevalo. Sure she was humiliated and dethroned on live television in front of millions of people, but had there been no mix-up and ensuing chaos she would be a complete unknown today — unable to command international media attention and (what will likely come in the following weeks and months) high profile party appearances, and speaking engagements. You can see it now, in lights: "The Girl Who Was Almost Queen."

This runner-up-as-star principle isn't exactly unprecedented. In 2010 Detroit Tigers pitcher Armando Galarraga came extremely close to pitching a perfect game when umpire Jim Joyce — the Steve Harvey in this scenario — made an incorrect call, ruling one of Galarraga's opponents safe on base when he was, in fact, out. Thanks to Joyce (who, like Harvey, apologized profusely for his bad call), Galarraga didn't get his perfect game. But he did get boatloads of respect and sympathy from media and baseball fans. In fact, the incident, known today as "the Imperfect Game" or the "Galarraga game," is remembered as an example of pitching genius and a spectacle of good sportsmanship (Galarraga was unusually gracious in the face a terrible call).

It's hard to believe that Galarraga's game would stand out so distinctly today had he gotten his wish and pitched a perfect game. In fact, you could argue that more people know who he is precisely because he was the victim of a bad call. The same can be said about Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo who, thanks to Harvey's colossal mistake and the graciousness with which she gave up her crown, will not slink into obscurity. It's possible she'll be remembered longer than her competitor.

"No one remembers who came in second," said the golfer Walter Hagen. The quote is a favourite among "winners" — among them, surprise, surprise, Donald Trump. But perhaps it's time to amend the expression — or more specifically, to complete it. No one remembers who came in second, unless, of course, they got royally screwed out of first.

Emma Teitel is a national columnist for the Toronto Star. She has been a front-of-the-book columnist for Maclean's magazine for the past four years, focusing on a wide range of subjects including women's issues and popular culture. She won the National Magazine Awards gold award for columns in 2013.

metroview

'Real change' under Trudeau doesn't even begin to cover it

Richard Gwyn

For roughly the next fortnight, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will have nothing more strenuous to do than enjoy himself with his family and utter occasional seasonal pleasantries.

He's more than earned this time off. For six weeks now, Trudeau has been going like a bat out of hell, or, more directly, like a politician convinced he should, and can, transform the country, and even to some extent the world itself.

His pace is unprecedented. The one parallel in our history is the commitment Lester Pearson made to start his tenure with "60 Days of Decision," or doing everything better than had his predecessor, John Diefenbaker.

His program came to an abrupt end when his finance minister, Walter Gordon, brought down a bungled budget he then had to withdraw. Thereafter Pearson moved cautiously, although he went on to introduce universal health care, the Canada Pension Plan, and our flag.

Trudeau has moved far faster. His single most important project would transform the relationship between native people and other Canadians by implementing the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and granting "nation-to-nation" status, near autonomy, to indigenous organizations, political and cultural.

Others are as ambitious. Canada's first-ever serious commitment to climate change. An increase in taxes to generate more jobs for the middle class, but at the cost of increasing the deficit. A new electoral system.

And on and on. A new relationship between the provinces and the federal government. Withdrawing Canadian troops from the Middle East except as trainers well away from the front lines. Bringing 25,000 refugees from Syria.

Trudeau's phrase "real change" is inadequate. Only in the years after the Second World War, when Canadians first embraced the welfare state, has the country been challenged by so radical a political and cultural program.

Signs of stress have begun to appear. At the climate conference in Paris, Trudeau declared that on this issue Canada would exercise "a new leadership role." He was overdoing it by a wide margin. We're latecomers to the cause. We account for only 1.6 per cent of global emissions.

The sharpest stress comes from the economy. Finance Minister Bill Morneau has signalled the promise to hold the increased debt to $10 billion over two years is out of date.

The sense that "Canada is back" hasn't changed. Trudeau should use the break to keep doing what he's doing, a good deal more slowly. He has a huge majority on his side. But if their jobs vanish or their salaries shrink, the loyalty of many will turn to themselves and their families.

Richard Gwyn is a Toronto Star columnist.

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

J.K. Rowling says she 'loves' a black Hermione as Noma Dumezweni cast in Harry Potter play

Homework isn't what it used to be

Heavy backpacks are passé as kids' homework is increasingly completed online. It makes supporting a child's learning at home especially challenging for parents. Here are four teacher-recommended learning apps that will help kids to keep up — or maybe even get ahead. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Grade 8 student Asha Ibrahim, 13, left, reacts to getting a correct answer as she does her homework with Brainrush. Her cousin Hanan Hassan, 13, and also in Grade 8, middle, and sister Amina Ibrahim, 11, Grade 7 encourage her. CHRIS SO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Brainrush

Best age: All ages
Price: Free
App store rating: n/a (available at brainrush.com)

"Of all the apps I've used with my class, BrainRush is the best," says David Vaillancourt, a teacher at C.R. Marchant Middle School in Toronto. This platform allows teachers and students to play, create and share learning games. The use of "adaptive practice" ensures that students are challenged, but not overwhelmed. "Students look forward to using BrainRush, and the games' ability to adapt and respond to the individual student is a unique feature not available with a lot of ed-tech apps," Vaillancourt says. "Parents find it a valuable resource for learning at home and they can easily monitor their children's' progress."

DragonBox Algebra

Best age: Students 5 to 12 (and up)
Price: $4.99
App store rating: 4"½ stars out of 5

Brian Aspinall, a Grade 7 and 8 teacher at Indian Creek Road public school in Chatham, Ont., recommends DragonBox Algebra as an engaging, problem-based method of helping students learn basic concepts such as variables and balancing equations. "I've been using this app for years and students really enjoy learning with it," he says.

Google slides

Best age: 7 years old
Price: Free
App store rating: 4"½ out of 5

Traditional homework is often solitary and boring, but Google Slides changes all that. Students use the app to write journals, create digital books, solve math problems and create presentations. Their work can be easily shared with peers and teachers for immediate feedback. It's like a dynamic, interactive 21st-century diary.

Tools 4 Students

Best age: Students 5 to 14
Price: $1.19
App store rating: Not yet rated

Jonathan So, a Grade 6 teacher with the Peel District School Board, finds Tools 4 Students invaluable. The iPad app provides 25 different organizer templates to help students organize their thinking, take better notes, or prepare their thoughts before writing. So recommends Tools 4 Students for essays and research activities.

HEALTH

Home birth with midwife no riskier than hospital in most cases: Study

For women with low-risk pregnancies, babies delivered at home with a midwife are at no greater risk of harm than those born in hospital with a midwife's assistance, an Ontario study has found.

The three-year study of almost 23,000 pregnancies found the risk of adverse birth outcomes was low for both planned home and hospital deliveries and differed little between the two groups, said lead researcher Eileen Hutton of the midwifery education program at McMaster University in Hamilton.

"That was true both for women having their first babies and women having their second or subsequent babies," said Hutton, noting that 35 per cent of those in the study were first-time mothers.

The study, published Monday in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, used 2006-2009 provincial health records to compare rates of stillbirth, neonatal death and adverse health conditions among newborns from almost 11,500 planned home births and an equal number of planned hospital births among women with low-risk pregnancies.

Researchers found that 75 per cent of women who planned a home birth were able to deliver at home, while 97 per cent of those who chose a hospital gave birth in that environment as planned; emergency medical services were required for eight per cent of the women delivering at home — either before or after the birth — versus about two per cent in the hospital delivery group.

The number of adverse outcomes for babies was almost identical for both groups: there were 12 stillbirths or neonatal deaths within 28 days of birth among the women who planned home deliveries, compared to 11 among those who chose to go to hospital. There were no maternal deaths.

But researchers found that women who delivered in hospital were more likely to have interventions such as pain relief, labour augmentation, assisted vaginal births or caesarean births, compared to those who delivered at home. There was also a higher rate of episiotomy among women who gave birth in hospital. An episiotomy is a surgical cut made at the opening of the vagina during childbirth to ease delivery and prevent tissues from rupturing.

MIDWIFERY

Midwifery is a publicly funded service; there are about 800 to 900 licensed midwives in Ontario.

Hutton suspects the differences may arise because women who intend to give birth at home may be "more intervention-adverse. For example, in terms of pain relief, they're more inclined to think 'I can manage without this and I trust my body and I'm going to do it.'

"There's also probably the fact that you are at home, and in your home environment the physiological process of labour may work better," she said.

Midwives provide neonatal care, attend deliveries and follow-up post birth.

"Home birth, I think, is a very contentious topic in many circles," said Hutton. "We have good reason to support women's choice of having a home birth, but often women are looking for information to validate that choice.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rewire kids' brains to regulate behaviour

Dr. Vanessa Lapointe says that as a psychologist, about 90 per cent of the parents she sees come in because of behavioral challenges in their children. CONTRIBUTED

PARENTING

Discipline by fear is a short term solution, expert says

Picture your kid misbehaving. Maybe they're jumping on the sofa, or having a meltdown, or throwing toys at their siblings. As a parent — what do you do? Send them to their room, make them skip dinner… or offer them a reward if they cut it out, perhaps?

You might want to rethink your methods, according to a new book from Vancouver-based psychologist Dr. Vanessa Lapointe. In Discipline Without Damage: How to Get Your Kids to Behave Without Messing Them Up (out in January), the mother of two puts parenting strategies in perspective — and debunks some popular ways to discipline your kids.

Lapointe talks about why certain forms of discipline can impact kids' development, and what parents should do instead.

In the book, you talk about common ways parents handle those moments of acting out — things like time-outs, grounding kids, and offering rewards. What's wrong with those long-engrained approaches?

First of all, we have to land at why those approaches have become so popular. It's because they afford instant gratification. When you give a child a time out, you're going to have an immediate reaction — the child stopping their behaviour. Yes, you've got the behaviour to stop, but you've managed to stop it at a cost — it's out of fear. It's like going to the carnival and you play the whack-a-mole game; you've whacked it down, but it's going to pop up in another way, like another behaviour or frustration, because the child continues to have this unmet need for the parent to come alongside them. Frustration often morphs into aggression, either outwardly or inwardly directed, which could mean self-loathing or self-harm.

So what's the better way to discipline kids, then?

The thing is, children are going to be children, based on how their brains are growing. Behaviours we look at as challenging are just a natural part of being a child. We need to come alongside and connect with them. The key to discipline without damage is to be disciplining through a relational connection with your child that meets them in their natural state.

You give one example of a mom calming down her daughter Sophia by taking her aside and explaining a situation to her calmly. It seems great, but how do parents achieve that in moments of stress and frustration?

Parents need to be in a regulated state to come alongside their children and be the regulator in that relationship. When you're looking in on a child who's engaged in some kind of challenging behaviour, you might see that behaviour as that of a child who needs to be schooled and put into place. Instead of seeing your child as a brat, see them as someone who is having a hard time while their brain is really fired up. When you see them through those kinds of eyes, it invites a whole new kind of emotion. If you lived in my house, I'm not a rock star, and I'm not doing this perfectly all the time. There are days when I'm a hot mess! But no-one says you need to be perfect — you just need to do this enough times so your child's neural circuitry holds onto enough over time. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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More adults being treated for ADHD

MEDICINE

Consequences of the disorder more serious for grownups

At age 28, Matt Turcotte is facing facts: He's an adult with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

As a headstrong teenager, he rebelled against the diagnosis he'd received at age 6, flatly refusing to take medication any longer. "I just hoped I'd outgrow it," he says.

Instead, the demands to be attentive and organized grew. He got through university and a first job by taking medicine as he needed to focus.

In the last year, he's been reading about the disorder, meeting with other ADHD adults and seeing a psychiatrist to figure out what medicine and dose works best for him.

"I want to take ownership of this," says Turcotte, who is enrolled in a postgraduate business course and hopes to launch a marketing career. "When you read about ADHD in adults, it's a bleak employment outlook if left untreated."

While treatment has long focused on children, a new report by the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network examined the effectiveness, safety and accessibility of ADHD drugs for the increasing number of adults requiring them. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of ADHD prescriptions for adults rose by 119 per cent, according to the report.

The increase is partly due to the growing recognition that not all youngsters shed their symptoms as they age. For about 50 per cent of diagnosed kids, the hyperactivity may reduce, but other concerns, such as inattention and impulsivity, continue into adult life, says Dr. Doron Almagor, president of the Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance.

"It's not as visible in adults, but its consequences are more serious," says the psychiatrist. "A child forgets to hand in homework. An adult loses a job."

Almagor often sees parents in their 30s and 40s recognize the symptoms in themselves after their children have been diagnosed with the disorder, which tends to run in families.

Adults frequently deal with coexisting illnesses, such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse, brought on by years of struggle. "I've sat with adults in their 40s and 50s who are finally diagnosed, after 10 jobs, three wives, two bankruptcies," says Heidi Bernhardt, president of the non-profit Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada. "They've been spinning their wheels all their lives."

Perhaps unnecessarily so. The report found that ADHD medication improved adults' symptoms, such as trouble concentrating, difficulty planning or completing tasks, restlessness, low frustration tolerance, quick and frequent mood changes, poor social relationships and low self-esteem.

"In general there's a high level of effectiveness with the drugs compared to placebos," says the report's lead researcher, Tara Gomes, a scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and St. Michael's Hospital. The report reviewed the clinical trials conducted on adults with the disorder.

With ADHD, the parts of the brain that help regulate a person — sort of the brakes and transmission — are underactive, says psychiatrist Almagor. The drugs work to increase dopamine levels, which have a calming effect and help the person self-regulate.

The report's top recommendation is that Ontario keep its no-age-limit policy for ADHD medicines for people on the provincial drug benefit plan. Some provinces restrict these drugs to people under 18 or under 25.

Medication, however, should be just one part of treatment, says advocate and educator Bernhardt. Many adults benefit from treatments such as psychotherapy, cognitive behaviour therapy or ADD coaching, which help them strategize on how to be organized and attentive.

In addition to medication, Russ Le Blanc, 58, meets with a psychiatrist, an ADHD specialist, monthly. "We talk about all the luggage, the frustrations, the depression that goes with it," says Le Blanc, who owns a small ad agency.

"A lot of people still don't believe adults have ADHD," he says. "It's the Rodney Dangerfield of disorders. It gets no respect."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INCREASED NEED
Between 2009 and 2014, the number of ADHD prescriptions for adults rose by 119 per cent, according to a new report by the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network.

Matt Turcotte, 28, has ADHD and is learning how to live adult life and cope with the disorder. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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A minute may go long way to health

CYCLING

Sprints may be just as good as a 45-minute workout

A U.K. study which involved Curtin University, Australia has suggested that the increasingly popular high-intensity training has the same cardiovascular and metabolic benefits as traditional moderate-intensity training.

Researchers looked at 87 healthy but inactive participants between the ages of 18 and 60, and randomly divided them into high intensity or traditional exercise programs, each lasting for a duration of 10 weeks.

Participants in the high-intensity group followed one of two training regimes, three times a week. The first regime was an 18-minute workout which involved 15-second high-intensity cycling sprints with 45 seconds active recovery, the second was a 25-minute workout which involved 60-second cycling sprints and 60 seconds of active recovery.

The traditional workout group did moderate-intensity cycling for 30 minutes five times a week, progressing to 45 minutes five times a week by week 10. Both groups used personal monitors to check they stayed at the required age-specific heart rate throughout the workout.

The study's results showed that the high-intensity group demonstrated health improvements that were similar to those of the traditional moderate exercise group.

Both groups also showed a comparable reduction in non-soluble fats in the blood stream, which are associated with cardiovascular disease. AFP

9 per cent

Both groups showed a 9 per cent improvement in how much oxygen the body is capable of utilizing, which is associated with reduced mortality.

Six one-minute bursts of high-intensity training might be just as good as your traditional workout, according to a new study out of Australia. ISTOCK

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‘Fat but fit’ is not healthy: Study

RESEARCH

Heavy people with high activity levels still at risk

A new Swedish study has dismissed the idea that ‘fat but fit’ is OK, finding instead that obese men with a high aerobic fitness level were still at a higher risk of early death than those of a normal weight but with a lower fitness level.

Aerobic fitness level and obesity have been well studied in older participants, but less so in older adolescents. Wanting to look at a link between aerobic fitness in late adolescence and risk of early death, the team of researchers from Umeå University, Sweden followed 1,317,713 men with a mean age of 18 between 1969 and 1996.

The team also looked to see if risk of early death was linked to the level of aerobic fitness in those that are obese, as well as those of normal weight.

The team of researchers assessed participants’ aerobic fitness by asking them to cycle until they had to stop due to fatigue, and assessed causes of death using national registers.

During a mean followup period of 29 years, the results showed that increased aerobic fitness was linked to a decreased risk of early death, with men in the highest fifth of aerobic fitness showing a 48 per cent lower risk of early death from any cause compared with those in the lowest fifth of aerobic fitness.

However, although aerobic fitness was also associated with a reduced risk of death from any cause in both normal-weight and overweight individuals, these benefits were reduced in obese individuals.

In addition, men with a normal weight had a lower risk of death than obese participants even if their fitness levels were lower, showing a 30 per cent lower risk of early death.

There were also no significant health benefits at all in those participants who were in the extreme obese category.

The study was published in the International Journal of Epidemiology.

For an average of 12 years the team looked at 334,161 European men and women measuring height, weight and waist circumference. Participants were also asked to report levels of physical activity. The results, published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, found that as body mass index (BMI) increased, the benefits of the walking decreased. AFP

FITNESS

Lower weight

Men with a normal weight had a lower risk of death than obese participants even if their fitness levels were lower, showing a 30 per cent lower risk of early death.

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER

THIS WEEK: Shrimp appetizers

Shrimp appetizers are a popular choice for holiday parties, but staying away from the deep-fried variety will keep it healthier.

PICK THIS

PC Jumbo Cooked Shrimp

Portion 8 shrimp
Calories 90
Fat 0.5 g
Protein 20 g

SKIP THIS

PC Butterflied Shrimp

Portion 6 shrimp
Calories 300
Fat 16 g
Protein 6 g

HERE’S WHY

Equivalent in fat to an 8 oz sirloin steak.

Those innocent-looking small appetizers that we pop in our mouth are hiding excess fat, calories and sodium — and of course, no one eats just one! For a healthier holiday app, cooked jumbo shrimp are a great choice. They are a good source of lean protein with virtually no fat. Dip them in a zesty cocktail sauce or toss into a salad or pasta. Avoid the breaded and deep-fried shrimp, which have a load of unnecessary calories and fat, and much less protein. Too many of those and you’ll for sure have to hit the gym in the New Year.

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FILMMAKERS

Japanese fest offers big money

A Japanese festival focused on the art of the short film is offering a new award of nearly a million dollars to a director from anywhere in the world with a great pitch for a movie.

Organizers say short video is where audiences are going, as entertainment increasingly gets consumed on smartphones. They also believe the format holds potential for novice filmmakers, bringing fresh insight.

500,000¥

Five finalists will be chosen. Each gets a 500,000 yen ($4,000) prize. Then one will receive 100 million yen ($800,000) to make their movie. That winner will get an additional 1 million yen ($8,000) award.

The deadline for submitting a 500-word pitch on what's billed as a "thrilling, exciting, moving" storyline is Feb. 29. The pitch must be written in either Japanese or English.

"Movies aren't about length," said Tetsuya Bessho, an actor who founded the festival in 1999, likening the best short films to the minimalist but fine-tuned concentration of haiku poetry.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Live-action brings energy to Undateable

Undateable now films every episode live and tweeting is encouraged. CONTRIBUTED

THE SHOW: Undateable, season three, episode eight (City/NBC)
THE MOMENT: The Fourth Wall

Permanently single dude Danny (Chris D'Elia) just met Charlotte (Whitney Cummings) at his local watering hole, but already they feel a connection.

"I bet your sex life is like Nic Cage's movie career," she taunts him.

"You'll do anything."

She stretches out her legs. He cracks wise about her having balls. She says one of them has to. "Careful," he says, holding back real laughter. "Don't get us cancelled" — here he looks straight into the camera — "twice."

The studio audience cackles on cue.

This series joins a growing wave of live TV, as networks scramble to give people a reason to watch shows as they air.

> **This series joins a growing wave of live TV, as networks scramble to give people a reason to watch shows as they air.**

The Sound of Music Live! and The Wiz Live! scored big in their broadcasts. Grease Live is set to air January 31.

Tyler Perry recently announced he'll host a live musical about Jesus, The Passion, this coming Palm Sunday.

Undateable floundered in its first two seasons, but a live broadcast last May perked up ratings. Now every episode airs live, complete with musical guests who perform during breaks, live Tweeting encouraged (the actors' Twitter handles appear on screen) and much smashing of the fourth wall that usually divides the cast and audience.

In-jokes are big (Cummings and D'Elia costarred in her show, Whitney), as are stunt casting, winking at the audience, exaggerating any mishaps or missed lines, and hamming it up for the cheap seats.

The cast sure seems to have a good time.

But they should redirect some of that energy into the scripts.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Colombia stands by runner-up beauty

Former Miss Universe Paulina Vega removes the crown from this year's Miss Colombia, Ariadna Gutierrez, in order to give it to Miss Philippines, Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach. GETTY IMAGES

TITLE MIXUP

Miss Universe host declares wrong winner

The beauty pageant-obsessed South American nation briefly celebrated what appeared to be an unprecedented feat: back-to-back Miss Universe titles.

From President Juan Manuel Santos to Miss Colombia's relatives in the Caribbean port city of Barranquilla, Colombians shouted in joy when it was announced that Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo had won this year's crown.

But the celebrating turned to shouts of anger seconds later as host Steve Harvey announced on live television from Las Vegas that he had mistakenly read from the cue card. The contestant from the Philippines was the new Miss Universe, not Miss Colombia.

"The entire country, and our family, was overcome with emotion," Alvaro Arevalo, the Colombian runner-up's cousin, told Blu Radio in an interview Monday. "The truth is we're a little shocked."

The sudden reversal even caught by the president by surprise, forcing him to reverse his initial celebratory Tweet.

"For us you'll always be our Miss Universe," he wrote in a message to Gutierrez after the error was discovered. "We feel very proud."

Colombians are obsessed with beauty and pageants are a major draw across social classes. But unlike neighbouring Venezuela, which has won seven Miss Universe titles, Colombians are accustomed to falling short of the crown, with four runner-up appearances since 1992.

Before last year's crowning of Paulina Vega, only one other Colombian had won the Miss Universe title, in 1958.

In the aftermath of Sunday's shocking finale, Colombians were at a loss to explain the mistake.

Some morning talk show hosts blamed Donald Trump, saying they could find no financial record confirming that he had indeed sold the rights to the pageant as he said he did in September.

Many Colombians were earlier outraged when Trump on the campaign trail accused Mexico of sending rapists and drug traffickers to the U.S. On Sunday, some said they believed the Republican presidential candidate was somehow still pulling the strings to prevent another Latina from being crowned.

Trump said Monday that he regretted the mix-up, adding that it would never have happened under his watch.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TV COMEDY

Reitman dynasty is growing

Catherine Reitman knows her last name goes far in Hollywood.

After all, her dad Ivan Reitman is a veritable giant in comedic film and her Oscar-nominated brother Jason Reitman is an established director in his own right.

Nevertheless, she's not taking anything for granted as she leaps from budding TV actress to TV series creator with her comedy Workin' Moms, currently in development at CBC-TV.

It's easy to assume that a famous name opens doors, but the 34-year-old says it can easily work against you.

"Usually when people hear my last name, before they really get to know me or work with me, there's probably a lot of preconceived notions that come with that. And I imagine most of them aren't good," Reitman says by phone in a recent interview from Los Angeles.

"Because for every wonderful second-generation of a famous person, there's people that aren't that way. More entitled people. People who probably ride that coattail. And that hasn't been my brother's story, that hasn't been my story."

INSTAGRAM.COM/REITCATOU

Catherine Reitman is creating a comedy for CBC.

Between the Sheens, the Coppolas, the Smiths and the Hanks, famous offspring abound on film and TV, with Canada boasting a few of its own mini-dynasties in the making.

There's, of course, movie star Donald Sutherland and his acting sons Kiefer and Rossif; sitcom star Alan Thicke and his crooning son Robin; film producer Kevin Tierney and his actor/director/screenwriter son Jacob.

CBC-TV is also home to the Levy clan, where famous pop Eugene shares the screen with son Dan and daughter Sarah in their fish-out-of-water comedy Schitt's Creek.

Reitman, whose acting credits include Black-ish and It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, expects Workin' Moms to be a tough learning curve. In addition to being the show's creator, she'll serve as a writer, director and star, not to mention new mom to a second baby due next year.

But she's fuelled by passion for the material, noting it sprang directly from her own experiences with her first child, which included a bout with post-partum depression.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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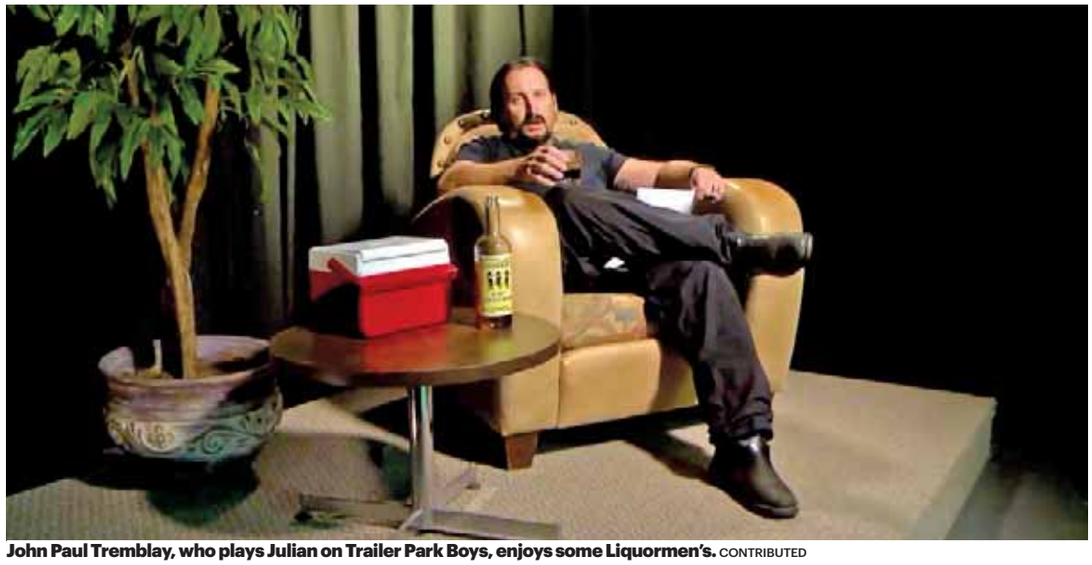
Boys selling a taste of the Trailer Park

ALCOHOL

Show-inspired whisky hitting shelves in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland

Rebecca Dingwell
For Metro | Halifax



John Paul Tremblay, who plays Julian on Trailer Park Boys, enjoys some Liquormen's. CONTRIBUTED

Fans of the Trailer Park Boys and whisky lovers alike can rejoice.

The stars of the Nova Scotia-based comedy show have teamed up with Dartmouth Spirits Inc. to put their very own liquor product on the market. Liquormen's Ol' Dirty Canadian Whisky has hit NSLC shelves in time for Christmas.

"The Trailer Park Boys thought it was a way to provide something for their fans," said Peter McCreath, managing director of Dartmouth Spirits Inc.

McCreath credits the group's widespread fame to their international comedy tours, as well as the rise of their show's popularity on Netflix.

"They just returned, a month or so ago, from a tour in Europe," said McCreath. "They played to packed houses everywhere they went."

The product is a logical extension, McCreath explained, since the Trailer Park Boys characters are no strangers to booze.

"One of the characters is always carrying a bottle — why not make it one of their own?"

So far, the rye whisky is only available in Nova Scotia as well as Newfoundland and Labrador. The hope is that it will be all over Canada by spring.

According to McCreath, over 4,000 bottles of the whisky were sold in Newfoundland during their first six weeks on the market.

"If Newfoundland is any example, the demand in Nova Scotia is gonna be very large," said McCreath.

The whisky itself is made at a distillery in Alberta. They also use the services of Rock Spirits, a subsidiary of the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation — the only liquor corporation in Canada that runs its own bottling facility.

"We aren't so much competing in the rye market as we are providing something for Trailer Park fans," said McCreath.

"We may move on to other products as well."

The whisky is currently available at five locations across the province, including Port of Wines in Halifax and NSLC's Tacoma Drive location in Dartmouth. By January, McCreath is expecting that number to increase.

"I'm particularly glad they got into some stores this weekend, because some people will see it as a nice Christmas gift."

Liquormen's Ol' Dirty Canadian Whisky. CONTRIBUTED

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Singing through the seasons

Weather can act as a muse or metaphor in song. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CAROLS

Study looks at lyrical tributes to weather in popular song

Holiday songs mention the heat nearly as often as they do the snow, according to a recent study by British meteorologists who combed through pop music lyrics looking for references to the weather.

"Perhaps surprisingly, in Christmas songs in our primary list the word 'cold' is used less than one might expect, but instead is implied through idealistic Christmas images of snow," the authors say.

Take Let It Snow, for example: "Oh the weather outside is frightful/But the fire is so delightful."

Many holiday songs feature some version of this contrast because they are written for an audience in the northern hemisphere, the researchers say.

The only exception they found was the upbeat Christmas countryfolk single Summer by Australia's Sunny Cowgirls, which describes barbecues, jet-skiing and "runnin' round with the sprinklers on."

Sally Brown and her co-authors from the universities of Oxford, Newcastle and Reading didn't only study Christmas-themed music; they found 759 weather songs in a karaoke database, from Good Day Sunshine to Blowin' in the Wind. (The majority of the weather songs, in fact, were by The Beatles or Bob Dylan.)

The researchers' aim was to investigate "how society portrays weather in music and the types of weather that inspire musicians." But they also just wanted to have a little fun, the lead author Sally Brown, a research fellow at the University of Southampton, told the Toronto Star.

It all started on a lark, she said. At a conference in 2012, the meteorologists played an icebreaker game where they listed off weather-related tunes: You Are the Sunshine of My Life, Walking on Sunshine, It's Raining Men — the list went on.

They had so much fun doing it that they continued in their spare time, between studying coastal geomorphology and experimental atmospheric physics, Brown said.

Out of the 190 songs that had weather as a primary theme, sun and sunshine were the most common references, followed by rain.

The researchers say they may explore the subject further by studying music in other languages or focusing on certain genres.

Whether they do or not, their experiment has already changed the way some of the authors listen to music.

"Last week, I was working away in a hotel and they had Christmas music and I was counting the weather references," Brown said.

"It was Frosty the Snowman." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

STUDY FINDINGS

Weather holds the key

Very often, the weather is used as a metaphor for love or a relationship, lead author Sally Brown, a research fellow at the University of Southampton noted.

Bus Stop by The Hollies, for example: "All that summer/We enjoyed it/Wind and rain and shine/That umbrella, we employed it/By August, she was mine."

For some songwriters, the weather seems to have acted as their muse.

George Harrison apparently wrote Here Comes the Sun after leaving a business meeting in April 1969, on the first sunny day of the year after a particularly dreary winter, according to the study. Meteorological records show that that April was the sunniest month on record until 1984. When Harrison sang "It's been a long cold lonely winter," he may have been speaking literally.

They also found a correlation between certain weather references and the keys that a song is in. Mentioning the sun "significantly increases the probability" that a song is in a major key, while songs in minor or mixed keys are more likely to mention the rain. If a song in their database mentioned a rainbow, it was 100 per cent likely to be in a major key. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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The Boston Red Sox will retire Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs' No. 26 during a ceremony at Fenway Park on May 26.

Leafs have high hopes for Helsinki handful

WORLD JUNIORS

Toronto keeping close eye on five top U-20 prospects

Mitch Marner and William Nylander are two of the biggest names at this year's world junior hockey championship, and Mark Hunter hopes that means good things for the future of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Marner, the fourth-overall pick in 2015, and defenceman Travis Dermott will be playing for Canada, while forwards Nylander and Dmytro Timashov will represent Sweden and winger Kasperi Kapanen will don the blue-and-white of host Finland.

"I think it's great for the organization," Hunter, the Leafs' director of player personnel, said on a conference call Monday morning. "I think over the years if you've seen these players who had big world juniors they've also done very well in the National Hockey League for years to come."

All five players are thriving in major junior or the American Hockey League, but Hunter thinks they can refine their games even more on the world stage.

"I think it's an experience and the hype and the emotion that you're going to get in the National Hockey League is what these players will get from (the world juniors)," said Hunter. "I think it's important to feel that emotion and I think it's such a hyped-up tournament.

"Of course, the other side is in the competition. The competition is the best in the world at that age. To be one of the best in that tournament, as a player and as a team, it's important to their career."

Marner was taken fourth overall in the 2015 NHL draft and is third in the Ontario Hockey League's point race with 22 goals and 36 assists in 25 games for the London Knights. Dermott was taken in the second round, 34th overall, in the 2015 draft. He has two goals, 25 assists and a plus-21 rating after 29 games with the OHL's Erie Otters.

LOOK BACK

The Leafs have not had multiple prospects on Canada's junior team since 2003 when they sent Carlo Colaiacovo, Ian White, Kyle Wellwood, Matt Stajan and Brendan Bell to the Halifax-hosted tournament.

Colaiacovo (Buffalo) and Stajan (Calgary) are the only two still currently playing in the NHL.

Mitch Marner should feature prominently when Team Canada kicks off the world junior championship against Team USA on Boxing Day. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Travis Dermott (Canada), William Nylander (Sweden), Dmytro Timashov (Sweden) and Kasperi Kapanen (Finland) join Marner in Helsinki. GETTY IMAGES

Nylander leads the AHL with 14 goals and 20 assists in 27 games for the Toronto Marlies, while Kapanen has five goals and five assists in 17 games.

Timashov is sixth in the QMJHL's points race with 18 goals and 35 assists in 29 games for the Quebec Remparts.

Canada plays Sweden on Wednesday in a pre-competition exhibition that will see Marner and Dermott square off against Nylander and Timashov.

Go to metronews.ca for coverage of Monday night's Leafs game on the road in Denver.

Canada and Sweden will meet again on Dec. 31 in the preliminary round.

"It's going to be fun to watch, that's what it's all about," said Hunter, who will travel to Helsinki, Finland, to watch. "It's going to be a good game that I'm going to enjoy watching."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

TFC trade 'keeper Bendik

Toronto FC has traded goalkeeper Joe Bendik to Orlando City SC for a conditional fourth-round pick in the 2017 MLS SuperDraft.

Bendik started last season as Toronto's No. 1 but could not win his job back from Chris Konopka after suffering a foot injury. The club decided not to pick up his contract option after the season. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Gunners pull ahead of City

Arsenal boosted its Premier League title hopes and dented Manchester City's with a 2-1 victory over its rival at the Emirates Stadium in London on Monday.

Theo Walcott gave Arsenal the lead with a ferocious low strike from the edge of the area in the 33rd minute, and Olivier Giroud doubled the advantage on the stroke of halftime. Yaya Toure pulled a goal back for City.

The win puts second-place Arsenal on 36 points, two behind Leicester's 38. City is third on 32.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Olivier Giroud scored the winner for Arsenal on Monday. GETTY IMAGES

Jonas Valanciunas, left, won't be back in the lineup when the Raptors host Dirk Nowitzki and the Mavericks on Tuesday night. GLENN JAMES/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

NBA

Valanciunas edges toward Raptors return

Jonas Valanciunas had a healthy sweat running off of him by the end of practice Monday, his first in more than a month since he broke a bone in his left hand.

But the return of the Toronto Raptors starting centre to the practice court doesn't instantly mean it will lead to his return to game action, certainly not for Tuesday's home date against the Dallas Mavericks.

"I don't know," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said repeatedly when asked about Valanciunas's status, shortly after it was announced he had been cleared to re-join the team.

Valanciunas didn't have an answer on a return date either, but said his first day of practice in just over a month felt good.

"I'm happy to be here, to have a chance to practise with teammates, it was great," he said.

When he does get back on the court, Valanciunas will rejoin a team that can look like a world-beater one night, then drop a game to a lesser opponent the next night. The latest example is Sunday's loss to the Sacramento Kings which came on the heels of an impressive win over the Miami Heat.

"We've got to start better," Valanciunas said of what he's noticed from the sidelines. "But you know, we're still a young team and it's a work in progress. I think everything is going a better way."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BUSIER BISMACK

Bismack Biyombo has filled in well for Jonas Valanciunas since his injury, particularly on the defensive end, but he lacks the Lithuanian's offensive polish. Biyombo has averaged 5.2 points, 8.6 rebounds and 1.3 blocks per game.

GETTY IMAGES

FIFA

‘I will fight until the end:’ Banned Blatter

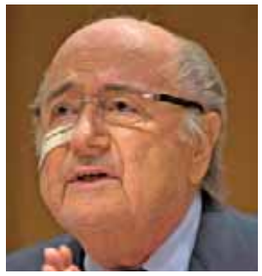
Banished from soccer’s ruling body for eight years for unethical conduct, Sepp Blatter won’t give up the presidency of his beloved FIFA without a fight.

“I will fight. I will fight until the end,” Blatter said Monday at a news conference that started 90 minutes after he and former protege, vice-president Michel Platini, were each banned by FIFA’s ethics committee.

It was a stunning removal of world soccer’s most powerful leaders over a $2 million payment by FIFA to Platini, the president of European soccer’s ruling body UEFA. The payment is also the subject of a criminal investigation in Switzerland.

“I’m sad. It can’t go on this way. It’s not possible,” said the 79-year-old Blatter, who has spent more than half his life working for soccer’s scandal-hit governing body. “After 40 years, it can’t happen this way. I’m fighting to restore my rights.”

Already serving a provisional ban, the elected FIFA president and Platini, his long-time likely successor were kicked out of the sport just two months before 209 member federations elect a new leader. Their offences were judged to be conflict of interest and disloyalty to FIFA. They avoided life bans because corruption was not proven. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sepp Blatter
PATRICK B. KRAEMER/KEYSTONE VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **“I am now suspended eight years, suspended eight years. Suspended eight years for what?**
> Sepp Blatter

NFL

Beckham’s lack of control earns him one-game ban

Losing control during Sunday’s loss to the Panthers will cost Giants star receiver Odell Beckham Jr. one game.

The NFL on Monday suspended Beckham for next weekend’s visit to Minnesota for his conduct against Carolina, when he drew three personal foul penalties. The league cited “multiple violations of safety-related playing rules.”

Beckham appealed the decision. His case will be heard by either James Thrash or Derrick Brooks, the hearing officers jointly appointed by the NFL and the players’ union.

Without Beckham, the Giants (6-8) would be missing their best offensive weapon as they try to stay alive in the NFC East race.

Beckham and Panthers cornerback Josh Norman tangled from the beginning of the Panthers’ 38-35 victory. At one point, Beckham delivered a diving helmet-to-helmet hit on Norman while blocking. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dishing more dirt

ROGERS CENTRE

Jays to reap benefits of conventional infield layout

The Blue Jays haven’t officially announced plans to install a dirt infield at Rogers Centre for the upcoming season, but Stephen Brooks, the team’s senior vice-president of business operations, spilled the beans via Twitter on Saturday.

“Plan to start in Feb.,” Brooks tweeted in response to a fan’s question about when he could look forward to more dirt and less turf in Toronto.

Team president Mark Shapiro said earlier this month that a dirt infield — as opposed to just the dirt cutouts around the bases and pitcher’s mound that are currently in place — was “definitely” under consideration for the upcoming season.

The Jays are one of just two teams in Major League Baseball who play their home games on artificial turf and they are the only team without a dirt infield. The Tampa Bay Rays also play on turf, but have always played with dirt between their bases.

While it could spell the end of Toronto’s self-proclaimed “world’s fastest grounds crew,” here are five reasons why a dirt infield is a cut above.

More predictable hops on a dirt infield could aid the likes of third baseman Josh Donaldson.
STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 IT LOOKS BETTER

This will be the most obvious upside to fans.

A dirt infield looks more like an actual baseball field, with the sand-and-clay diamond surrounding the lawn around the mound.

Simply put, it’s more pleasing to the eye.

2 IT’S EASIER ON THE BODY

Dirt or no dirt, artificial turf is still basically a carpet laid atop concrete, but a dirt infield should be better for players’ bodies by providing more of a buffer from the unforgiving concrete floor.

Adding dirt to the base paths will reduce players’ exposure to the worst elements of the field.

3 A BETTER QUALITY FIELD

The biggest obstacle to an all-dirt infield at the Rogers Centre was the Argonauts and the stadium’s accommodation of football, which required the baseball field to be rolled up and laid atop itself.

Every time the turf is rolled up on itself the quality of the turf is degraded.

Expect more stained jerseys STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

4 MORE PREDICTABLE HOPS

Players are likely to prefer the predictability of an all-dirt infield, which will be more uniform than turf.

“The thing they won’t have to deal with any more, though, is balls hitting seams (in the turf) and shooting six inches to the right or left,” said Mike Mordecai, the Jays’ co-ordinator of minor-league instruction and a former big-league infielder.

5 ONE STEP CLOSER TO GRASS

Installing natural grass may not be as much a priority for Shapiro as it was for his predecessor, Paul Beeston, but moving to an all-dirt infield is still a step in the direction of a natural field.

Adding dirt to the infield will require retrofits to accommodate water drainage, which will also be necessary to install grass. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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RECIPE Tuscan Chicken Skillet Dinner

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

With meat, veggies and legumes in a single recipe, you don't need anything else for dinner. And you won't miss the mess of more than one pan to clean!

Ready in
Prep time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 lb chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 tsp oregano
- 1/4 tsp thyme
- 1 1/2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes
- 14 oz can cannellini beans, drained
- 19 oz can tomatoes
- 1/4 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp sugar

Directions

1. Pour the oil into a large skillet and warm to medium heat. Brown the chicken. You may have to work in batches. Remove from the pan and set aside. Drain all but about 1 or 2 Tbsp of fat.

2. Add the mushrooms, oregano and thyme to the pan and allow the mushrooms to become quite soft and brown. Remove them from the pan and set aside.

3. Add the onion and garlic and cook for about 3 minutes until they're soft and fragrant. Add the sugar, sun dried tomatoes, canned tomatoes and beans. Simmer for about 5 minutes, breaking up the tomatoes with the back of a spoon.

4. Gently tip in the chicken and mushrooms and simmer for another 10 minutes, until the meat is cooked through.

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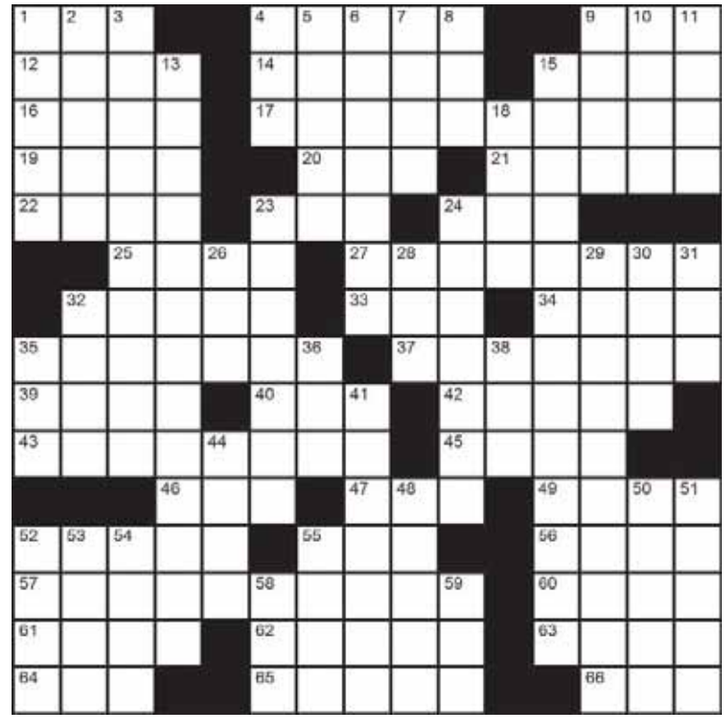
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Puny planes posting
4. Bing Crosby's Christmas medley duettist David
9. Li'l hairstyles
12. Cartography subj.
14. 'Pine' is a popular one at Christmas
15. Hourly pay
16. Tech sch. grad
17. Sporty character voiced by Canadian actor Paul Kligman in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer": 2 wds.
19. Roughly
20. Realty database, commonly
21. Beginning
22. Genuine
23. Comprehend
24. Towels holder
25. Houston ML-Ber, to fans
27. "Up on the __ __": Christmas tune that goes "Down through the chimney with lots of toys..."
32. Burglar
33. Lieutenant Tasha __ ("Star Trek: The Next Generation" role)
34. Ploy
35. "Gimme Little Sign": 1967 hit for __ Wood
37. Ritzy spice
39. Tennis great Bjorn
40. Egg mass
42. Clods
43. Treats left for Santa
45. Lounge around
46. Ctrl, Shift, __
47. Long river in Scotland
49. Jeans tops
52. "Let __ Be Peace on Earth"
55. __ Mahal
56. Stagnate
57. "We Three Kings of Orient Are"... "Field and fountain, moor and mountain / Following __ __."
60. Change position
61. Seal herds
62. Buy
63. By any chance
64. Photo __ (PR events)
65. Groups, briefly
66. Cousin of -ette

DOWN
1. Spew
2. Opera voice
3. People like Yukon Cornelius when travelling: 2 wds.
4. Grad letters
5. "__ __, All Ye Faithful"
6. Rich
7. Bus. name abbreviations
8. Ordinal suffix
9. Beaver creations
10. S-shaped moulding
11. Cobblestone
13. Holiday things sent/received: 2 wds.
15. "It's the Most __ __ of the Year": Classic tune on #48-Down
18. Dove murmurs
23. "Don't hold back!": 3 wds.
24. In a country style
26. Soak flax
28. '_' __ in Ornament
29. Bird in "The Twelve Days of Christmas": 2 wds.
30. Bears, in Barcelona
31. Write
32. Deanna __ (Counselor on "Star Trek: The Next Generation")
35. 'Start With Trust' is this org.'s slogan
36. "__ so fast!"
38. __ Fighters (Rock band)
41. Mansion settings
44. Peter Fonda title role
48. Current festive album produced by Bob Rock: '_ __ Arden Christmas'
50. North Pole toyshop workers
51. Soothsayers
52. 'Winter' as Wnter
53. Basketball net
54. Halts
55. Tea stirrers [abbr.]
58. Cape Town's home [acronym]
59. Li'l streets

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You are on your way up in the world. The Sun's move into the career area of your chart means if you have a plan and if you make the effort there is nothing you cannot accomplish.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
The Sun's change of signs endows you with almost limitless confidence. But try not to take life too seriously. Make a point of seeing the funny side of everything that happens.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
The week will bring to light something you have been trying to hide from yourself. If you want to get over it now is the time to face up to your demons. They are not as terrifying as you imagine.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Get over any embarrassment you might feel at revealing your innermost feelings. Even if you are the kind of Cancerian who keeps your emotions in check you will want to share what is in your heart.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Anything you begin will have the stamp of success on it, so long as you start slowly and don't take silly risks. You have big ambitions but you still need to take care of your health.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The Sun moves into the most dynamic area of your chart today, making this one of the best times of the year for getting things done. Have a plan and pace yourself.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
As from today you will feel a lot more positive about what kind of person you are and what kind of things you should be doing in your life. If you feel yourself pulled in a new direction don't let others talk you out of it.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You'll let others know what you think and feel today. However, that does not mean you should tell them everything about yourself. It could give rivals information to use against you.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The efforts and sacrifices you've made recently have not been in vain, and your financial situation will improve by the end of the week. Don't rely on promises — get cash in hand.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you focus your energy in a single direction you'll achieve something amazing. There can be no more doubts or wondering if you are making the right moves. Choose a path.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You're about to get yet another opportunity to overcome a fear and you must take it. Stop worrying about life and start living it and enjoying it. There are so many good things in the world.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Someone you meet on your travels will become a good friend and also a partner who can assist with the big projects you've got lined up. Your needs and theirs are closely related.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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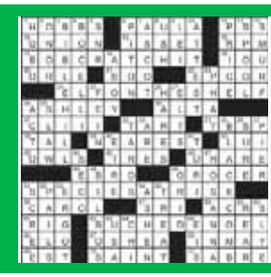

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